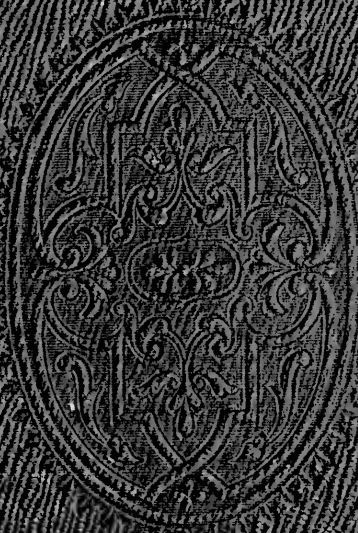


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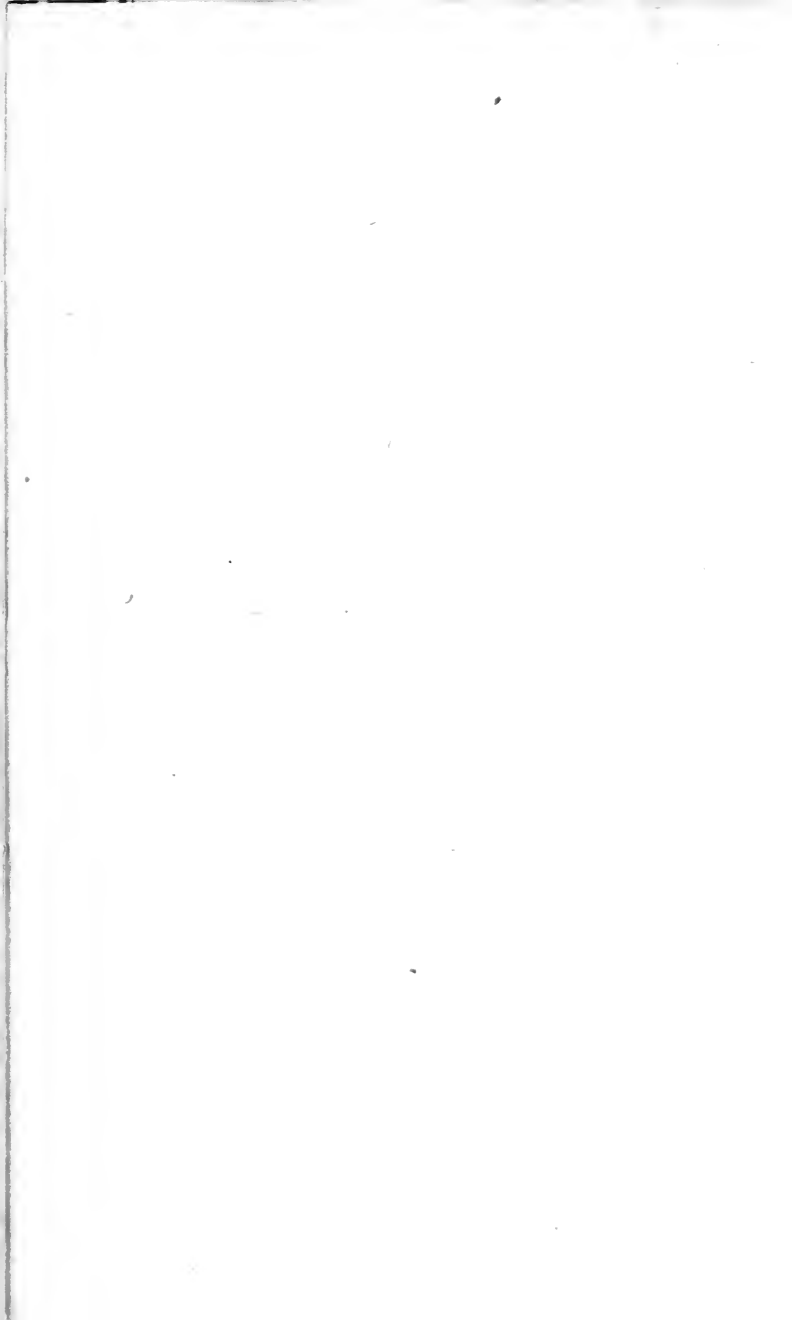
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< by Josiah Phillips Quincy >  
in edition of the author's  
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# CHARICLES:

A DRAMATIC POEM.

BY THE  
AUTHOR OF LYTERIA.

BOSTON:  
TICKNOR AND FIELDS.

M DCCC LVI.

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## PREFACE.

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THE structure of the following drama is intended to resemble that of the Greek tragedy. It is written upon an event, rather than a plot; the scene is laid in the open air before the temporary abode of royalty, and the action is limited to a single night. The attempt has been made to invest a character with something of the dignity and moral power of the tragic chorus. The division into acts is in compliance with modern usage; the pauses being no longer than those that must be supposed in many of the best models of classic composition.



## INTRODUCTION.

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THERE are few instances of retributive justice more solemnly striking, than may be gathered from notices of the death of the third Cæsar, in the writings of Suetonius and Tacitus. A vigorous constitution, strengthened by the simple habits of early life, enabled Tiberius for a time to resist, not only the diseases that his later excesses poured upon him, but also the poison that was covertly administered by those in the interest of his successor. Stung and nettled by the taunts and execrations that arose about him, we read, that the dying tyrant would at one time strive to conceal the depth of his infamies, and at another, for very despair, would publish them in reckless bravado to the world. Feeble in body and a prey to superstitious fears, Tiberius journeyed for the last time towards Rome. Frightened by a fancied prodigy, and seized by mortal illness, that he dared not acknowledge to those about him, the emperor, when within sight of the city, turned suddenly, and gave the order to press back again to Capri. By increasing the extravagance of his debaucheries, by an occasional display of physical power, and by the constant scorn with which he affected to treat his physician, Charicles, the unhappy man sought to disguise his true condition from Caligula and his adherents. In vain, however, was every artifice—his death was too surely seen to be approaching; and finally Charicles acknowledged to those about him that

the end must soon come. For this event measures were immediately taken—councils were held in private and despatches sent to the army and its commanders. Efforts were once made to induce Tiberius to appoint a successor; but even in the agonies of death, he grasped the signet ring strongly upon his hand, and refused to allow it to be taken. Yet not only was the tortured monarch made to realize the plots formed against him, and the contempt of those who should have been bound to his interest by personal favor and lavish liberality; but a punishment of strange severity was reserved for him. For upon recovering from a fainting fit, that had been mistaken for death, he found Caligula clothed with the insignia of royalty, and surrounded by a band of fawning courtiers. The whole party, paralyzed with terror at his unexpected resuscitation, for a time gazed stupidly upon the maddened tyrant. Finally, Tiberius was thrown upon a bed, where, at the order of Macro, he was deprived of life by suffocation.

Most of the incidents, as will be seen by a reference to the note at the close of the volume, are to be found in the historians already mentioned. A slight dramatic license has been taken in their arrangement and amplification.

The characters of Tiberius and his successor are intended to be consistent with their historical representation—the former having, as we are assured, something of the scholar and the poet mingled with the voluptuary, the tyrant, and the atheist; and the latter screening at times his detestable qualities under a crafty pretence of modesty and moderation.

In writing the part of Charicles, who is simply mentioned as a physician in the train of Tiberius, not employed to prescribe, but assisting with friendly advice, the imagination may be allowed some liberty. So likewise in Ennia, the wife of Macro, historically known as mistress and promised empress of Caligula.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

TIBERIUS.

CAIUS CÆSAR CALIGULA.

CHARICLES.

LUCULLUS.

CRASSUS.

ENNIA.

*The scene is an open space before the villa of Lucullus. At the base of the hill upon which the villa stands, are buildings for the accommodation of soldiers, retainers, and others. The action commences about sunset.*





The only Brutus left these craven times,  
Shall dare to strike the monster.

LUCULLUS.

Soft, I pray,  
We may not yet give word unto the hope  
That eager dwells within us.

CRASSUS.

Nay, the end  
Hurries upon him, although desperate will  
Still wields the body. At Circejus here,  
In the full circus, when all eyes grew bright  
As the speech faded on his rigid lip,  
And pain's dull gripe wrinkled his face in sufferance,  
Two massive lances from the guards he snatched,  
Rushed to the front, and shouting to the crowd  
*"Cæsar is mighty yet!"*—  
With certain aim transfixed the panting boar,  
That made the soldiers pastime. Nerving thus  
His arm to one great effort that drained off  
The dying strength of nature, back he reeled,  
And carried by his hirelings, left the games  
A shattered mass of grossness.



LUCULLUS.

Charicles

Was with him when he fell ?

CRASSUS.

Yes ; to recall

A life that crimson the hard cheek of earth,  
And shames the patient heaven ! Strange it is  
That wise physician—whose well-governed mind  
And vigorous frame conjure the chains that time  
Binds on his latter years, and show them garlands—  
Strange such as he should use his hard-earned skill,  
To cheat infernal gods of their ripe victim !

LUCULLUS.

'Tis whispered here that comradeship of youth,  
When this luxurious reveller bore arms  
Nobly against the Germans, knit so close  
The love of Charicles to this our tyrant,  
That now,—of all the crowd of sycophants,  
Soldiers, relations, courtesans, who press  
About the dying monarch,—he alone  
Stands firm and faithful to keep back the throng,

Who curse the lagging energies of life,  
And aid the fates to do their welcome office.

## CRASSUS.

The ring of soldier's steel breaks from below !  
The horsemen, that by some half-hour precede  
The Emperor, already fill the court.

## LUCULLUS.

Can he be Macro who still sits his steed  
While all descend about him ?—no ; he wants  
The crafty courtesy that could supplant  
The powerful Sejanus !—Dignity  
That cannot palter, in his stillness lives.  
A knight detains his stirrup—Ah, his step  
To earth wears cautiousness like age. He speaks  
To those about him, while he bares his head  
In salutation. Whitened locks like those  
Mark only one in all the monarch's train.  
'Tis the physician Charicles !

## CRASSUS.

His mien  
Cannot be counterfeit : It is indeed

That brave old man who hither bends his steps.  
The freshness and the vigorous trust of youth  
Still cling about him, as the kindly vine  
With its fond verdure wraps the storm-stripped trunk  
In richer beauty, than when summer birds  
Wantoned among its branches. He displays  
A virtue not of impulse, or that temper  
Whose native mien shows fairly,—but has grown  
To all that men should honor by hard toil  
And daily self-denial. As we praise  
The fair conception that the artist strikes  
From shapeless matter—rudely shivering  
And tearing without pity through the rock,  
Until his thought toils slowly into form—  
So let us reverence him who doth not spare  
To chafe and rend his being, till it shrink  
To beauty more divine than any craft  
Can mimic to the sense.

## LUCULLUS.

This Charicles,—

So have I heard, and your report confirms,—  
Deserves the high commending of a man  
Who dares revere a truth, before the crowd

Are scourged to worship it,—whose loyalty  
To true nobility ungarlanded  
Is ever constant—yet whose generous heart  
Hoodwinks his judgment to the benefit  
Even of this Tiberius.

CRASSUS.

He is here ;—  
Few of our modern youth who climbed that hill  
Would breathe so easily.

*(Enter Charicles.)*

You speed to-day ;  
We thought that Charicles could ill be spared  
By his great patient. But perhaps even now  
Rome's prayers are answered, and Tiberius lies  
Beyond the help of leech-craft.

CHARICLES.

Sir, he lives ;  
And in a sudden gust of strength that Will  
Drove through the shrinking fibres, spurned my aid,  
And bade me quit his presence ; lest the people,  
While a physician waited at his side,  
Should fancy Cæsar mortal !

CRASSUS.

Stay not then

A moment in this villa !—he will repent  
This rashness, and again demand thy arm  
To battle off his doom. Leave him to those  
Who dare not stay the vengeance the high gods  
Devise for their blasphemers.

CHARICLES.

I must not

Desert the final moments of a man  
Whom friendship past has dowered with a claim,  
That in his sad necessity dispels  
The difference of years. We combatted  
Together by the Rhine ; and earlier still  
In that fierce Rhætian war when the rough Alps  
Leagued all their bulk against us. I have seen  
Tiberius, tentless, stretched upon the earth,  
While meanest soldiers with their blankets screened  
Cold starlight from their faces ! Through long nights  
He gave command that any who had doubt  
Of the next day's success, should break his rest,  
And hear him tell again the well-laid plans

That promised victory. Our studies too  
Waked better sympathy : the Cæsars hold  
A spirit quick to seize what lesser men  
By grappling and hard toil with grief attain,  
And his bright wit, quick-flashing on the task,  
Dispersed all doubts that shrouded the coy truth.

## LUCULLUS.

Methinks that Charicles may claim discharge  
From old indebtedness, in saving him  
Whom Rome calls master, from a blacker deed  
Than history shall whisper. I have heard,  
From one who served at Capri, of a feast  
Where poison lurking in the wine-brimmed cups,  
Should banquet all to silence—had not he  
Who planned this infamy, summoned in haste  
A certain skilled physician, who prepared  
An antidote, that saved the guilty man  
From his own vile contriving.

## CHARICLES.

Such report  
May be as empty as the thousand tales  
Men fable of their rulers. When we know

The open baseness of this sullied man,  
We need not crimes that secret rumorers breathe  
To make our pity fuller.

CRASSUS.

Hast thou then  
No harsher word than pity, for this scourge  
Of the vexed earth ! this mercy-mocking fiend !

CHARICLES.

None, none, sir,—for he suffers. While the gods  
Delayed their retribution, there was room  
For other feeling. Now, when every grief  
Pours on his naked head—when thick'ning pangs  
Gnaw through the aching frame—and the hot thoughts,  
Surging in chaos, rise and beat against  
The rock where reason lingers—when the men,  
Who fawned upon his greatness, plot his death—  
And friendless, helpless Age in sorrow drifts  
To that dark ocean, where unsightly wrecks  
Of powers that cursed their holder, heave and toss  
In ghastly impotence—then, anger melts,  
Leaving compassion, awe, and tenderness.

CRASSUS.

Yonder are those untouched by any sense  
That dulls their instant profit—Caius Cæsar,  
And with him Ennia, whom he promises  
Success shall make his empress !

CHARICLES.

Let me then

Withdraw unnoticed, for the Emperor  
Must arrive speedily. I would put off  
This garment soiled by travel, and prepare  
To minister in these emergencies.

LUCULLUS.

Then follow, sir, our villa welcomes all—  
Though Caius would not seek to shelter one  
Who comes to guard what he, for greater cause  
Than doth possess us all, plots to destroy ;  
While Macro's haughty and ungoverned wife,  
Sold by her lord's ambition and her own,  
Shall brook thy presence little :—So have care,  
Her hate may prove most deadly !



## CHARICLES.

Fear thee not ;

For I have marked this woman, and observed  
Her spirit swell beneath indignities,  
Which to the world she carries mockingly.  
In her there fails that mediating sense  
To temper down the bright ideal of thought,  
That it may warm to healthiness the life  
Scorched by excess of lustre. She is formed  
Of fine perceptions, through which every breath  
Vibrates to joy or agony unknown  
To coarse and passionless existences.  
Such beings are developed in convulsion :  
Their energies unused refuse to rust,  
But do ferment and strive for mastership.  
Strange, to confess the thousand accidents  
That make us as we are !—Do we part here ?

## LUCULLUS.

This way for thee. I go below to greet  
The Emperor : his coming will be sudden.

*(Exeunt Lucullus and Charicles.)*

CRASSUS.

How hardly stands the time when we must hail  
These selfish plotters, who for private gain  
Would push Tiberius to his eager grave,  
As Rome's best patriots ; when our fingers yearn  
To doff our caps to this Caligula,  
As one whose very blackness must show fair,  
Contrasted with that arch-oppressor's wrongs,  
That scourge the patient earth to bitterness !

*(Enter Caius Caesar and Ennia.)*

CAIUS.

Ha, Crassus ! Was it Charicles who left thee ?

CRASSUS.

Ay, sir, he came but now.

CAIUS.

Mistake ! mistake !

He should have fled to Rome—out of the reach  
Of daily insult and indignity,  
That pays his care to lengthen out a life,

Whose blood coins riches for the man who steals it.  
Speed after him, say I have words to speak  
That shall ring profit ! Quickly bid him come !

[*Exit Crassus.*

Foiled by this man again ! when I have gained  
The popular voice, which may to-morrow call  
A rival to take up the falling crown.  
The guards, as yet fresh-bribed, are well prepared  
To hail me monarch. 'Tis to-night—this night—  
The sluggish deputation from the senate,  
Bought by long fawning, should arrive to wait  
His death, to call me instantly to fill  
The lofty seat he drops from :—and this night  
The old man dies ! This must be compassed, *must*,  
Despite this crafty leech who long enough  
Hath shut us from our hope.

ENNIA.

Tiberius drained  
The drugs that Macro mixed, and yet defies thee :—  
Truly our Charicles bears spells that raise  
Immortal aid to thwart thy purposes.

CAIUS.

He must be gained at any sacrifice ;  
\* And, Ennia, thou canst do it. Well I know  
The crafty words and winning speciousness  
Of a shrewd woman—and a fair one too.  
Thy weapons are more delicate and sure,  
Than bribes and threats that I might vainly use  
In pressing this great suit.

ENNIA.

Here is one man  
Might stand uncovered in the blaze of day,  
And let the wholesome sunshine search him through,  
To show no fleck upon him ! Canst thou not  
Find better uses for these purchased wiles,  
Than to obscure the single honest light  
By which we gauge our proper infamies !

CAIUS.

Waste not these doughty words on him who twirls  
Thee and thy future as a brittle reed  
Between his fingers ! Thou art mine. Reflect  
How I could bruise the life that I have sworn  
Shall wear imperial greatness !

## ENNIA.

As thou say'st,  
I am most helpless. On and upward then—  
It is my course and thine. If I have skill  
In reading stubborn men, no promises  
Of profit, or foreshadowed retribution  
Can sway this Charicles—impregnable  
On all parts, save that spot where honor waves  
Her insubstantial sceptre. But let me  
(If fortune so far help us) show him cause  
Why this man's death must truly glorify  
Him who invites it—show that both his gods  
And feeble senators will count him blest,  
Whose hand frees Rome from Capri's guilty lord,—  
And he is ours to use !

## CAIUS.

And having used,  
To punish, for the days of hope deferred  
That he hath cost us. I shall call thee empress  
Ere the dead east shall redden ; but to-night,  
We work ! No sleep or revel must intrude  
Betwixt our deed and hope. We father still

The future in the present, and our fate  
Is not stretched out before us, but is shot  
By our own effort through the blank hereafter,  
Where only fools run blindly. Charicles  
Returns : to thy persuading I may owe  
The crown we both shall wear. Be resolute  
In every subtle art that captives men  
From their own judgment. Ennia ! I trust thee.

[*Exit Caius Cæsar.*

ENNIA.

I shall be faithful, and will have success  
If mortal art can reach it. Then away,  
Thou image and perception of a fate,  
That wanders cruelly before my steps,  
Showing a sad, calm glory which doth mock  
My flushed and squandered being ! Let me quell  
The phantom, and press on—  
And in a mazy whirl of vivid life,  
Surfeit this restless soul. Our Charicles  
Worships that servile spirit, which resigns  
Fortune's best gifts for some fantastic good  
Begot in reason's dotage. He bows not  
With other men to the unbending will  
Of him who triumphs ; but refuses still

To pay the natural tribute which the crowd  
Render stern purpose, that breaks destiny,  
And dazzles men with what it steals from them.  
He is of those to whom substantial things,  
Clouded by fancy, seem as mockeries—  
And who would sway the universe by dreams  
That die upon their acting.

*(Enter Charicles.)*

It shows ill,  
Physician, when such reverent locks appear  
'Midst curled and scented parasites. We thought  
That spurned by this mad patient, thou had'st fled  
Beyond recalling, that his folly might  
Glare on his dying eyes.

CHARICLES.

Until the last  
I wait beside him. The physician sees  
Poor nature stripped of all the snares she throws,  
In her bright hours, for fickle sympathy.  
All hearts can feel when loveliness is touched  
With the quick shaft of sorrow—when the soul  
Quits earth in perfumed robes of sentiment,  
And genius, dolphin-like, from the dull lash

Of its own agony weaves robes of light,  
And bleeds in changing beauty ;—but when pain  
Strikes vulgar want or selfish luxury,—  
When the torn breast bares to the gazer's view  
Vice, cruelty, and wretchedness, that strive  
And mutiny 'gainst fainting reason,—then  
'Tis our place to stand firmly, and support  
With human pity what remains of man,  
To kind oblivion.

## ENNIA.

So dost thou wrong—  
Snatching the healing cordials of the earth  
To pour through bloated veins, while younger lives,  
Still capable of good, perish unheeded !

## CHARICLES.

He who hath knowledge to renerve the pulse,  
May not thence arrogate the power to give  
Or hold his skill, from any suffering.  
All life alike claims his large sympathy :  
The dews of heaven the sombre cypress feed,  
Like the gay poppy.



## ENNIA.

## A starved Pestilence

Sits pressing his foul lip, and from his breath  
Drinks hateful sustenance ! Thy fatal spell,  
That holds this sordid life, oppresses earth.  
The senate has defied him, and the throng  
Run wildly in the streets, and call aloud  
That his dead bones—for oft his death is rumored—  
Be thrown like carrion to the yellow stream  
That cleanses Rome. *Tiberius to the Tiber—*  
This is the cry that dies upon the breeze  
That even now sweeps by us. As a god  
Shall he be worshipped, who the state shall free  
From this incumbent horror. Caius Cæsar,  
Whom nobles, senate, people, long to crown,  
Shall hold him in his heart, who boldly strikes  
The blow to-night ;—or but forgets to shield  
Tiberius from the hands that are not shamed  
To do their country service !—

Charicles,

I thought to have been temperate in my speech—  
But craft and cautiousness fit not the time  
Or business. Freely have I spoken ;—so  
Return thou answer.

## CHARICLES.

The blanched locks I wear  
Should cover no ambition. As the ear  
Dulls to the harmonies of sense, the words  
Of sober duty closely press themselves  
About the listening heart. Transgression must  
Scourge its fooled victim—though its knotted whips  
Fret not those younger days, when our fresh strength  
Leaps laughingly to pleasure's winning pipe.—  
Thou art most beautiful;—I cannot think  
That even Capri can have all debauched  
A soul enshrined thus fairly. Do not seek  
To bitter the high place that shall be thine  
By shedding royal blood—tho' thick with guilt—  
That thee and thine has patroned.

## ENNIA.

While we speak,  
The young Tiberius hurries to the side  
Of the crazed dotard, who in some mad freak  
May lift him to the throne ;—then there must flow  
More blood and richer, than supplies the veins  
Of one shrunk tyrant !

## CHARICLES.

Nay, if as thou say'st

The empire claim thy Caius for her lord,  
Be sure that her great voice shall drown the cries  
Of a dream-flattered youth. My daily craft  
Has given skill to read the signs that Death  
Stamps on the brow of the worn wretch he bids  
To slumber in his chambers. Ere the sun  
Shall thrice revisit us, this man shall lie  
Beyond the thrust of malice. Do not snatch  
So rudely at a life, that while we speak  
Melts from between thy hope and its fulfilment.

*(Re-enter Caius Cæsar.)*

## CAIUS.

Hast thou sped well? Speak, woman,  
For our stained uncle, stung with pain and travel,  
Now rages in the court! Physician, say,  
Is our suit granted?

## CHARICLES.

What is honest, sir,  
There needs no suit to press. Proposals base

Cling not to my remembrance ; and perchance  
The sight of this grieved man, whose failing steps  
His menials scarce support to where we stand,  
Shall banish them from yours, and turn this guilt  
To sober admiration at the doom  
The god-defier tastes.

The Emperor !

*(Enter Tiberius, attended. He is followed by  
Lucullus, and many others.)*

TIBERIUS.

Hail, friends ! Ha, Charicles, what brought thee here ?  
'Twas not my order. Take thy face from hence !  
Our tree, though something bent, is still well sapped,  
And needs no gardening. Speed thee to Rome—  
There suck the purses of the credulous crowd,  
The food of priests and doctors !

CHARICLES.

As a friend,  
An early and a true one, I entreat  
Your leave to tarry.

## TIBERIUS.

As a friend, then, stay—

For we have need of such. 'Tis said the people  
Armed with petitions, ay, and with clubs too,  
Pour from the neighboring country to besiege  
Our final night on their curst continent !  
To-morrow's dawn embarks us all for Capri.  
If thou dost stay, bewitch thy sober face  
With wine and garlands ; or if thou wilt deign  
The reek of slaughter won with ruder arms  
Than thy familiar physie—join my guards,  
And hew these beggars to the thirsty earth,  
Which from plebeian blood elaborates  
A blooming vesture to out-do and shame  
Our gewgawed lemans !

Orders were despatched

To have a banquet ready ! Is it served ?—  
I have heard something of the sunny grape,  
Whose essence cribbed in your sealed jars too long,  
Craves resurrection to renew its summer  
In these chilled hearts we bear. Am I not answered !  
Is't ready ! Ha !

LUCULLUS.

The nimble servants speed  
With loyalty still anxious in your service.  
Our tables bending with their choicest load  
Shall soon invite your highness. But this coming  
Was something sudden. We entreat your patience.

TIBERIUS.

'Twas not well done ! Feasts constantly replenished  
Should have awaited us. When we descend  
From our fair island, and do deign to tread  
The vulgar earth men live on, you should know  
How Cæsar must be welcomed !

Ennia,

Mix for me wine as thou wert wont at Capri,  
And bring it straight, for faintness is upon me ! Haste, I say !

[*Exit Ennia.*]

See there our doctor ; how from far he smells  
His chance of meddling profit. Keep thy drugs  
For slaves and frightened women ! Know our faintness  
Is caused by travel—and already passes ;  
What canst thou do, poor leech !—fatten on fools !  
When the time comes, we die.

## CHARICLES.

Ay, sir, we die.

But if the time should lag, man can select  
Some drug whose active potency is proved  
Swift to wind up the hours ;—and when the pulse  
Strikes off a day at every maddening beat,  
He can choose yet again, and with a drop,  
Distilled from other vegetable life,  
Undo the deadly errand of the first.  
Holds Cæsar not, unrecognized, perchance,  
Some old example in his memory  
That fits the saying !

## TIBERIUS.

Cease thy prating, peace !

I keep no memories :—but for a jest,  
I'll practise thee with seeming, and feign aches  
And knotted cramps, that shall thy craft o'erwhelm !  
Say on this spot a gnawing horror pressed  
Storming the seat of life, and sending forth,  
'Gainst this dependency and that, fierce pains  
That burned into the flesh. Say that this brow  
Pent in a sullen madness, that must soon  
Burst through the cracking flood-gates of the will,

And rage in every fibre—that this hand  
Uncertain, palsied, could no longer clutch  
The potency that warmed the sluggish clay  
With a faint show of being—add to all  
A tortured consciousness, weak to repel  
The blazing thoughts that a blood-craving fate  
Rained thick upon the brain!—If such a wretch,  
Steeped thus in fullest aggregate of woe,  
Cumbered the earth—what couldst thou do for him?

## CHARICLES.

Nothing ;—but smooth the painful path to death.

## TIBERIUS.

Art thou foiled now ! drug then the foolish crowd—  
When evils league to crush a monarch's life,  
They scorn man's frail resistance. Yet thou know'st  
We are yet free from pangs, that shall dispel  
The soft enchantments of the sensuous world,  
Ere we are called to leave it. Thou hast seen  
This arm more truly hurl the death-fraught lance  
Than any practised stripling. Well, sir, judge  
Are we not Cæsar still !—only a little weary.



## CHARICLES.

Seek stillness, then ;—the only medicine  
To soothe the ill thou bearest. Put away  
This purposed madness of red revelry—  
Relax the cords that bind thy troubled soul  
To worldly pettiness. Withdraw apart—  
For fickle sleep is soonest won alone.

## TIBERIUS.

Alone ! alone !—each nauseous drug thou own'st  
Were sweet to such a horror. We have climbed  
The Alpine heights together—grasping oft  
The rugged shrub, whose roots more firmly cling  
To their dead rock, than any gaudy flower  
To the warm earth that feeds it :—thus it is  
When every joy has perished, the starved heart  
Cleaves with its total being to a world  
Barren of any comfort. Solitude !  
I loathe its deadly presence, and grow sick  
Even as the brain now dreams it.

Charicles,

A word apart with thee, that the vexed soul  
May cast the fiend that haunts it. Thou hast dreamed  
Some show of truth in the weak jugglery

Fashioned by priestly knaves to drain their dupes !  
Perchance to this foul tenement we hold  
Thy folly gives a subtler principle  
Than self-informing matter ! Thy faint heart  
Projects its best of being from itself,  
And as a god adores it—as a god  
Cursed and dethroned by all the miseries  
That plough the world thou giv'st him. Nay, no word—  
Till I have scared thee with a prodigy,  
That shall out-wonder thy weak phantasy !  
Thou hast beheld Apollo's marbled form  
Stand in our hall at Capri—stand as fixed  
As our strong watch-tower, whose deep-seated base  
Grows to the stable earth. What thought hadst thou  
When this perfection sunned thee with its life ?

## CHARICLES.

The thought of one whose study contemplates  
Maimed and diseased mankind. In awe I stood  
Before the stone-cast dream, that mirrored forth  
A human form ransomed from every flaw  
Prophetic of infirmity and death !  
Long silently I marvelled ;—till at length,  
Drawing its fire from the fooled gazer's eye,

A consciousness divine inhabited  
This shrine too noble for mortality.

## TIBERIUS.

This image, sir—mark me, I pray thee now—  
A mass of stone, dead, senseless, chilly, mute,  
Ay, so thou think'st it,—heaved its rigid arm,  
And, as alone in speechless trance I stood  
Before the vital marble, breathed my name  
In voice whose terrible music fills my soul ;—  
Which, for a moment's calmness, must yield up  
The rash prediction to thy doubting ear.  
“ *God-mocking monarch* ”—these the very words,  
Echoed by night and day have they not sunk  
Deep, deep into my being !—“ *know the doom,*  
*That tardy justice for her scoffers rears,*  
*Breaks on thy guilty head. No hand of thine*  
*Shall place this spotless marble in the niche*  
*Whereto 'tis destined ! This stained island fly—*  
*Thy friends desert thee—E'en the very stones,*  
*That thou hast heaped in palaces and towers,*  
*In fragments strew the earth ! Away to die—*  
*To die upon the shore whose tainted sands*  
*Shall shame to hide thee ! ”*

## CHARICLES.

Sir, these sombre words  
Were but the fancies of a troubled mind,  
Which, sick with apprehension, turned its dreams  
To horrors palpable.

## TIBERIUS.

And thus thou think'st them—  
Thou, so weakly duped!—  
Teeming with boyish faith, thy heart can feel  
The breath of deity in monstrous forms,  
That strew the bitter earth. In stream and grove,  
The slavish soul thou bearest paints a god,  
Steeped in our human frailties ;—hopes, fears, hates,  
Loves, virtues, crimes, spawned of thy impotence,  
Thou giv'st the natural essence named by thee  
Creator, Jove, or Phœbus ! Doubt this sense—  
Question the miracle these eyes have seen !  
Hug dead delusions—defraud reason still !

## CHARICLES.

The studies I have followed, and yet more,  
Such observation as our cautious craft

Hails as its best instructor, teach disease  
May trick the eye with fancies, that shall grow  
In the red light of frenzy—from the brain  
Stealing a motion, form, and utterance,  
To cheat the mind that 'gets them. Then distrust  
The false impressions that the senses draw  
From worlds of their creation. But go forth  
When the pure soul, unscorched by feverish draughts,  
Hovers from earth with every fervent note,  
That swells in nature's anthem—there receive  
Undoubting, such belief as the young breeze  
Wafts in upon thy spirit. Know the calm  
That falls so softly on the passive mind  
Is not begot of falsehood!—know the Power,  
That clothed with life, light, action, sweeps us on  
Towards Beauty and Perfection, is no dream,—  
Howe'er our weak conception bodies it!

*(A Messenger enters.)*

TIBERIUS.

Thou art from Capri, fellow! Are thy galleys,  
That shall to-morrow bear us to our isle,  
Safe anchored in the bay?

MESSENGER.

They wait the will  
Of Cæsar ;—if again he choose to tread  
The spot that Jove has manifestly cursed.

TIBERIUS.

Ah, frightened knave ! What say'st thou !

MESSENGER.

That which these eyes have seen. This morning, sir,  
As our calmed vessels slowly float from shore,  
The rock-girt island seemed to toss its bulk  
Like our frail bark when winter's tempest blows.  
Thy stony palaces were bent and swayed  
Like the weak mast we govern. Then the tower,  
Proud, lofty mass that frowns upon the deep,  
Reeling from side to side, quivered and fell  
In thunder on the beach !—A sudden breeze  
Now rising from the south, swelled our dead sails,  
And bore us trembling from this scene of havoc.

TIBERIUS.

Physician, hast thou ears—or are they fooled

Like eyes of mine ! Frenzy, thy breath is on me !

Wine ! wine there ; bring it quickly ! This grotesque  
Fantastic fable should be quenched and drowned  
With all the sable shapes that flock to it.

(*Ennia returns.*)

ENNIA (*apart to Caius*).

The wine is mixed by Macro—potently  
To lull all pain asleep. I am enough  
Fouled in your service, and will do no more.  
Be thou the cup-bearer,—if yet thy will,  
Uncancelled by remorse, thrust at his life.

CAIUS.

I have no fear to act the thing I think  
Like whim-besotted women. Give it me !

Cæsar, the wine is craftily infused—  
Thus spiced and freshly mingled, marvel not  
That simple men in ecstasy supreme  
Called him divine who gave it !

Ennia, see,  
How eagerly he lifts it to his lips.

Soon are we safely anchored to that shore  
That long has fled before our quickened hope.

## CHARICLES

*(advancing, takes the cup from Tiberius, and pours the  
wine upon the earth).*

Give something to the gods ! Thy guilty court  
Dwelt not at Capri when its towers were razed !  
One poor libation meanly pays such mercy !

TIBERIUS *(after a pause)*.

There is but one of all this scented band  
That durst so honor them. Yet heed thee, heed,  
Lest thou presume too long on friendship past,  
And one day bleed for like officiousness.

## LUCULLUS.

The festal music that now rings within,  
Calls Cæsar to the feast our hasting zeal  
Has heaped to match his order.

## TIBERIUS.

Life freshens at the sound, and the warmed heart  
Leaps to the melody ! Physician, come,



Pour thy libations to a mortal god  
Whom it shall profit something. Have we garlands?

LUCULLUS.

This is the youth who bears them.

TIBERIUS.

Crown me, boy ;  
This yielding band of roses soothes the brow  
That aches with costly metal !  
Is the earth firm !—  
Methought it shook and heaved but now like that  
He told us of at Capri ! Prodigy !  
Ye all are stable, while I stagger here  
As one who walks the galley's slippery deck,  
When tempests lift our navies. To the feast—  
We should reel after. Help me on, I say,  
The will of Cæsar lives !—yet fitfully  
It flashes :—Charicles—thy hand—thy hand—  
How cold it seizes mine. Upon thy life  
No word ! on—on—Cæsar rules Cæsar still !

Lucullus, well this thirsty throng shall prove  
The wine your jars have ripened ; while our band

Of dancers and trained singers shall show thee  
What gods we keep at Capri. Ha, our wreath  
Has fallen—Bring another ! Ennia,  
The flush upon thy cheek rivals these flowers.  
Our race, good Caius, ever won the smile  
Of Roman beauty—thou art one of us !  
The music quickens. Why stand prating here—  
And let the ruddy moment of delight  
Solicit us in vain ! On to our revel !

[*Exeunt.*

*The Act closes.*

## ACT II.

*Ennia enters from the villa.*

ENNIA.

A moment pour thy cooling breath, oh night,  
Athwart my restless bosom. Ye cold stars,  
Freeze up those quickened feelings which at times—  
As even now they do—struggle beneath  
The weight of years and folly. Should the heart  
Still nourish its own venom—fret and waste  
A languid being in the narrow path  
Where custom binds it! No; though cramped by man,  
Toyed, wheedled, slaved, at last we break the chain,  
Renounce all mercy, tenderness, remorse,  
And glut our starving passion. Let no dream  
Of rest, revived affection, or of rays  
Familiar hope once flickered, touch the soul  
That fate sweeps on to power!—

## Music again

Charges the air with pity ;—mortal grief  
Pours forth its plaint in harmonies of art,  
Snatches the strolling breeze, and clogs its flight  
Toned with a human sorrow. Hence ! oh hence,  
Thou language of the soul that mocks our life,  
By rumoring a being all refined  
From the dull dross that drags this feebleness,  
Earthward from whence 'twas fashioned !

The young moon,  
Bedded in fleecy vapor, streams repose  
Vainly on this torn spirit. Glimmer on,  
Thou passive, icy wonder, which our priests  
Have mantled in a woman's fickleness !  
Hadst thou the choler, rancor, spite, hate, love,  
That ravens on her breast, thy drowsy beams  
Would sparkle sharply through the scattered night,  
And dumb with awe thy quaking worshippers.  
Sea gust !—who sportest with the floating mists,  
That heave and drift above me—lift my soul  
To wander freely among airy things,  
Grotesque imaginations, that may dull  
This aching need of loving—born to crave,  
Sting, perish, never to be satisfied !

Away thou life most false and incomplete !  
Yearn, languish all my being ! then create  
Ideal nothings, worthy to provoke  
Thy possible delirium of bliss,  
The energy and madness of thy love.—  
Flit then before me fair, absorbing shape  
Wrapped in unearthly power,—let my life,  
Spurning its selfish action, melt in thine  
And quicken there to ripeness !

Loud debauch

Swells through the opening gates ! Some parasites  
Reel forth to chill their fever-whirling blood  
From the cold breast of night ! This wooded path  
Shall shield me from their banter and light talk.  
*(As the doors of the villa open, a burst of revelry is heard.*

*Then enter Charicles.)*

CHARICLES.

Close up your doors again ! Shut drunken mirth  
And mad disorder in the tainted cell,  
That dulls their guilty jangle to the ear  
Of modest nature !—

Let me worship here.

The sainted benediction of the night

Floats softly through her temple. Every breath  
Charged with the fragrance of the blooming earth,  
Wafts absolution to the soul that feels  
All error, foolishness, and doubt apart  
From its true being. We do flay ourselves,  
So nobly fashioned, deeming we may not  
Wipe out the stain our youthful wildness trucked  
For pleasure coveted. We are not mocked,  
Feeling that man must triumph over sense,  
Which now he combats weakly. Aching, scarred  
At every pore, the clay-enchancing life  
Deserts the baffled soldier ; yet we know  
Those thrusts and buffets that his dying arm  
Drops feebly on his victor, still shall earn  
A life immortal on the painted page,  
That chronicles to the remotest time  
The patriot's fruitless courage ! Oh thou god,  
Or gods, or natural principle of right,  
Which blindly we must worship !—shall we not  
Receive again unmaimed the soul we lose,  
Battling with evil that has vanquished us !

ENNIA (*coming forward*).

Does the physician, doubting his own art,

Beseech night's chilly finger to retard,  
And time the throbbing of the hurried heart—  
Even like an unskilled woman !

## CHARICLES.

The live air  
Pours subtler vigor through the healthy frame,  
Than any draught wrung from the soothing weed,  
Or quick'ning root, at bitter need expert  
To minister to man.

## ENNIA.

Your patient, sir—  
Does he still suffer, play the boy, and mock  
The hand that holds dominion in his grasp ?

## CHARICLES.

The frenzy of his revel ebbs ; the eye,  
That flashed with fearless lustre, dully falls  
Upon the wanton throng. The lips that late  
(So thou hast seen) flung sparks of ribald jest  
On all that nature hallows, murmur now  
And ooze a childish prattle. Caius Cæsar,  
Silenced in wonder, gazes fearfully

Upon his sinking kinsman,—seeing well  
The sudden culmination of his hope  
Outstrip conspiracy and parricide.

## ENNIA.

There is a mercy yet ! The wretch shall die  
By Heaven's stroke, not ours—Assurance blest,  
I clasp thee ! And perchance before the last,  
His conscious mind may calmly designate  
Our Caius his successor : then we rule  
Untortured by the furies rumor feigns  
Shall haunt usurpers.

## CHARICLES.

It can hardly be  
The mind shall so resume its healthy function,  
As to prepare in calmness for an end,  
That, recognized, must hurl the startled soul  
Into chaotic torture. Memories past,  
And images of terror, uncontrolled  
By manly will, mingle with present things,  
And in a sore perplexity of sense,  
Crush out the feeble reason. Life will end  
In a vague dream, unbroken into time,



While unconnectedly the avenging thoughts,  
Draped all in ghastly horror, dimly flit  
About the jaded brain. So far as art  
Foretells what shall be, by experience  
Of what has been, thus shall the monarch die.

## ENNIA.

And thus we climb to power ;—power, that will make  
Our lives decay as his ! So we still pant  
For an ideal existence, to supply  
The stimulus to being, which we crave  
To thrust us from this passionless routine  
Of present meanness, folly, and contempt  
At the poor show we witness. The fooled soul  
Must struggle on,—not turn upon itself  
In sickening revolution. Oh sir, say—  
For from thy presence seems to flow a charm  
That wrests the question from me—is there not  
Some cunning trick to turn to harmony  
The discords, harsh and clashing, that repel  
The love, the peace we covet ?

## CHARICLES.

We are not left

To totter down to death, swayed to and fro  
By every breath of passion. Mastership  
Of our own thought, won and preserved  
Through effort, shall invest the craving mind  
With calmness ; but this faculty divine  
Comes slow and rarely to our fickle race.  
Yet those there are, who can the will command,  
Banish the frivolous degrading doubt,  
And singly turn the workings of the soul  
To one great object. Such a quality  
Is priest and sovereign unto him who holds it.

## ENNIA.

I recognize a wisdom in thy words  
That we can never reach. To know a peace  
Beyond, above us, is the misery  
That mocks our impotence ! Art thou a man  
So wrapt and crusted in with smoky dreams,  
That no conception of a happiness,  
Not won but hourly grasped at, goads thy soul ?

## CHARICLES.

Strength to conceive the thing we may not gain  
Shall bless or curse us, at our proper choice.

To strive for good,—not to abide in good,  
Is destiny most noble. We are palled  
In our vexed youth to find the thing we love  
Melt from our grasp ;—then, waking, we perceive  
That the hot hope that struggled in the mind  
Repelled the sober blessing nature pours  
Most tenderly on all. Bosomed in peace,  
We prison our own souls, and torture them  
With petty toys Fate dances in the air,  
Which touched, must fade and turn to bitterness.

*(Enter Caius Cæsar.)*

CAIUS.

Physician, thou hast saved us ! and shalt tell  
The doubting world Tiberius died untouched  
By mortal instrument. He labors now,  
And fights off death but feebly ; and we hope  
Before the last, he shall be urged to name  
Ourselves to take the throne. Our title then  
Cannot be shaken. I withdraw awhile,  
Lest some should say through tricking, and by fright,  
I wrung the crown from him :—but go thou in,  
To witness what my zealous partisans  
Shall plague him into uttering. Men will deem

Thy evidence unpurchased. Tarry not—  
Know it shall profit all.

CHARICLES.

I am obedient.

ENNIA.

How meekly our sage scholar bows his head  
To win the smile of Power ! His plans, most noble—  
But their expression in the life, how mean !—  
Nay pardon, Charicles, my shrewish tongue  
Libelled the heart most foully ;—thou art not  
Wrenched from thy course by interest or threat ;  
But envying thee too much, I seize suspicion,  
And doubting thee, loathe less my tarnished self.

CHARICLES.

I go to hush the brawling company,  
Who siege the bloated fragment of a man,  
That I have once called friend. Humanity  
Shall not be wholly driven from the wretch,  
Who lingers there, self-filed and desolate !

[ *Charicles returns to the villa.*

CAIUS.

Answer him not ! Check not his shallow whims,—  
For now I prize his presence, who shall give  
The people surety that the steps I mount,  
Are spotted not by blood.

ENNIA.

Art thou secure  
If he names no successor,—or another ?

CAIUS.

'Tis but a new assurance that I seek  
Of what is now most certain. Grant he dies  
Not naming me his heir—then I shall rise  
By clamor of the army, and paid throats  
Of vassal senators—paid to pretend  
A general call to power ;—yet the sway  
Yielded by act of his I doubly gripe,  
And dare the gods to cast me !

ENNIA.

Yet 'tis strange,  
How in the presence of this Charicles,

Our plotted height of power crumbles to meanness.  
These eager hopes in vapid languor die,  
And my soul feels the weary ache of climbing.

CAIUS.

Look on me then, and shelter here thy weakness.  
Think when thy hand shall wield imperial sway,  
When from thine eye, power, like its beauty, flashes,—  
How thou mayst burn, ay, brand with usury,  
Into the hearts of certain jealous matrons,  
Old scorn and spite !

ENNIA.

There, thou hast made me strong !  
My sinking nerve is fed, and I am thine.

*(Enter Lucullus, followed by attendants bearing  
torches.)*

CAIUS.

Why do these torches taint the wholesome air  
With their thick smoke ?

LUCULLUS.

The Emperor orders it ;

For he would drink the wandering breeze of night,  
Yet cannot brook the darkness.

CAIUS.

Hath he waked

From that dull stupor which we thought the chill  
Of instant death? Hath he named no successor?

LUCULLUS.

None, sir. His sinews tough, tho' wrenched and torn  
By mortal agony, cord in the soul.

When some essayed to take the signet ring,  
The type of all his power, feigning his words  
Had bid thee wear it,—lo! a sudden strength  
Poured through the dying frame; up, up, he sprang,  
With furious gesture cowed the cringing throng,  
And gasped for the physician. Charicles,  
Even at the instant entering, caught the moan,  
And hurried to his side. Then self-abandoned,  
The dotard clove to him as child to nurse,  
And bade him quench the ceaseless fire that scorched  
The citadel of life.

CAIUS.

Then Charicles

Would damp this heated reveller in the dew,  
That chills our festal garments ?

LUCULLUS.

Craving strong

For the free air Tiberius uttered oft,  
Ere the physician yielded to his prayer  
A slow concession. Then the fear of darkness  
O'erwhelmed him, and these torch-bearers are sent  
To temper the obscurity he dreads.

*(Tiberius, supported by attendants, enters. Charicles  
follows.)*

TIBERIUS.

Ay, here I breathe more freely ; and these throbs,  
That beat so heavily the spirit out,  
Are timed to slower measure : I had pressed  
The bound extreme, where human misery  
Tears out a passage through her prison house,  
And mingles with the ether ; but this blast  
Kindles the life within me ; I rule still !



## CAIUS.

Are you not weary, uncle? The gray haze  
Of morning glimmered on the distant hills,  
Ere your red torches gave the world new darkness.

## TIBERIUS.

Weary? no, no! I'm fresh and strong, good Caius,  
And can outfeast the maddest of you all!  
Ay, bout and brawl with any curly youth,  
High-flushed with nimble Bacchus!

## Take away

These flowers;—freshened by the dew-fraught air,  
Their odor sickens me. Nay, Charicles,  
Come closer—leave me not—for I would drain  
A portion of thy calmness. Dreams of horror,  
And fears unutterable fix their clutch  
Here, here, even in the heart! Lo! I may not,—  
I cannot grapple with their thronging host!

## CAIUS.

Mark you, Lucullus, how he mumbles there,  
And whispers the physician. The thick words,  
That quiver from his lips, break on my ear

In music ; murmuring, another hour  
Shall seat me monarch !—

Have the messengers  
Sent by the senate yet arrived to greet us ?  
One of our servants passed them on the road,  
And warned their speedy coming. Do the lights  
That flash and hurry through the court below  
Announce their presence ?

LUCULLUS.

Some unwonted stir  
Troubles the night ;—no other cause can bring it.

CAIUS.

Come, we will meet this mission ; for to bend  
Most humbly to these reverent senators,  
And their unwashed supporters, is our part,—  
At least to-day :—to-morrow !—Well, no boasts.  
Come, Ennia, show these vassals what an eye,  
And regal brow, shall dignify their crown !  
Then follow, friends, and lift your voices up  
In sudden acclamation, when they say  
The senate have preferred me. Bring your torches,—  
For he can die by moonlight. After us—all !

*(Caius Cæsar descends the hill, followed by all but  
Tiberius and Charicles.)*

## TIBERIUS.

Let me lie here. Carpet the chilly earth  
With your thick cloaks ; so, I am patient now.  
Why is this bustle ? The black breath of night  
Is heavy on us yet :—I must depart  
At sunrise, and ere night we shall carouse  
At Capri. Ha ! why go these lights from us ?

## CHARICLES.

See where the moon rolls back the draping cloud,  
To bathe in modest splendor every leaf,  
That flutters drowsy whispers to the breeze.  
We want no torches ;—let them go unquestioned.

## TIBERIUS.

Nay, I cannot support the maze of fiends  
That mock me with their laughter ! Bid them return,  
And let their tapers scare these busy thoughts  
That thicken in the darkness,—for their light,  
Warm with domestic memories, should quench out  
These shapes projected from the sable night

In livid streaks of fire ! Yet 'tis most strange,  
This potent fever, which doth shrivel up  
My very life, ay, scalds each separate vein,  
May not blaze forth, and lighting all the world,  
Beacon our race from whelming misery.

## CHARICLES.

Look up, old man, and with an effort cast  
Thy soul upon the universe. Implore  
The peace that rained upon thy boyish head,  
When, all untented, thou didst purely share  
The spacious couch of nature. For those orbs,  
Whose daily changes, so the learned dream,  
Direct our lives, stream something of their power,  
To bear above the feeble aches of earth  
Their trusting worshippers.

## TIBERIUS.

Weak, weak, and bound  
So strongly to its loathsome dwelling here,  
The spirit may not mount. The light that streams  
E'en through these darkened portals of the brain,  
Withers the feeble remnant of a life  
That lurks about me. Mutter not of peace ;

The very word bruited upon the night  
Scalds the dry lip it passes. Think of him,  
God Hercules, whom the grief-painting Greek  
Gave mighty verse to blazon forth all pain,  
That could be fixed in language ! Dost thou not  
Recall that misery intrenched in speech !—  
The virgin-chorus of immortal pity !—  
Are they not vivid still ?

## CHARICLES.

Faintly they show ;  
For cares and busy years despoil the mind  
Of its best treasures.

## TIBERIUS.

Yet those verses now  
Blossom afresh within me, and my grief—  
All that is physical—outwells in words,  
That utter the extremity of ill  
Our shrinking frame can suffer ! But, oh here !  
Here, in the centre, grows an agony  
That mocks expression :—Thou life-blighting pest—  
Immedicable thought ! thy potent fangs,  
Fleshed deep into the being, rankle on,

And taint with blackest pestilence the blood,  
That trickles through the heart. Oh Charicles,  
Drug, poison, kill, this wolfish Memory,  
That from vacuity coins wretchedness !

Why are these voices ? Why went Caius Cæsar  
So suddenly from hence ?

CHARICLES.

The senate, sir,  
Send, of their gravest members, certain men  
To hail an emperor, and confer with him,  
Touching oppression and high-handed wrong,  
That crimson all the country.

TIBERIUS.

Let them chafe  
In their own capitol ! Ill-timed this visit :  
We have no mind to hear their stale complaint.  
They shall partake the doom Procillius knew,  
He and his brother rebels, who would thrust  
Petitions in our face :—Now strongly gyved,  
In Roman dungeons they wear out their lives !

But why went Caius to them ? He will not  
Cringe, twist, and stoop before these reckless dolts.  
I know him, subtle, crafty, troublesome,  
To commoners ; but *I* have raised him up,  
And, bounteous in my largess, steeped his youth  
In every riot and voluptuous joy  
That sense can hanker for. Peevish restraint  
Harassed his frolics never : he partook  
Each melting madness hot-lipped Pleasure flung  
About our island ! He is bound to me  
By every chain that patronage and gifts  
Can rivet on the man fed by their bounty !

They climb the hill—A throng of men I see,  
But none distinctively. Are these the fools  
Who so desire to belch their petty griefs,  
That they must steal unbidden to my presence,  
And after bleed for it ? Well, let them come !—  
And yet this crowd strikes marvel to my soul—  
Death ! Are those guards of mine, who cheer the traitors ?  
Where's Caius Cæsar ?

CHARICLES.

At the head he walks,

Clasping the hand of one, whose dignity  
Acknowledged by the rest, proclaims him chief  
And spokesman of this mission.

TIBERIUS.

Traitor ! Ha—

Blast the suspicion ! Let me up, I say,  
For I am young and supple ! Does he dare—  
Or do these clamors thrilling in my ears  
Cheat my eyes also !

(*Enter Caius Cæsar, Lucullus, guards, Messengers, and  
others.*)

Well, what means this throng—

Who are these base intruders ? Answer me,—  
Or I shall grow and blaze before your sight,  
Yea, rain down fire upon ye, that shall singe  
With torture exquisite the very breath  
That pants your stale complaining ! Answer me.

CAIUS (*aside to his party*).

Be patient, friends. This burst of dying rant  
Shall harm you nothing—see, he reels and staggers,  
Grasping his servants for support ! Again  
If he demand your business, hide it not.



## TIBERIUS.

Speak, Caius ! lest the rage that fills me here,  
Break through the mesh of doubt, and marshal thee  
The way Procillius and his comrades went,  
To clank out treason to the sunless vault,  
That tombs their wretchedness.

## CAIUS.

Pray you look there !—

Come from the throng, Procillius ! follow ye,  
Whom the just senate frees from base restraint,  
And honors as the country's patriots !  
You threat me with their company,—I claim it !

## TIBERIUS.

Is this a dream firm-frozen in the brain,  
That flies not with its ghastly comrades ? Hence,  
Hence, hideous fantasy !

Caius, these fiends,  
Whom here thou seest so thickly grouped about,  
Feign treachery in thee—in thee, who knew  
E'en in thy freshest youth each quaint device,  
That goaded luxury could think ;—each subtle tinge

Long-wantoned fancy could to pleasure add  
Was lavished at thy word ! Ingratitude,  
Nay, black rebellion, to thy king and patron—  
Fie ! 'tis too monstrous ! Make a lesser lie,  
Ye torturing powers, for this too gross deceit  
Bounds harmless from me !

## MESSENGER.

Listen then to those  
Sent by the senate, to declare the will  
Of Romans, too long crushed beneath the rule  
Of thy curst monarchy. Though gored and torn  
By foul oppression, Rome has found the strength  
To curb thy dying havoc. She defies  
The carnage-craving dotard, stung to death  
With his own infamies. The noble men,  
Condemned to waste in dungeons, walk our streets,  
Freed by the senate ; and, by them despatched,  
We linger here till the quick hours shall give  
Our state a better ruler ;—till we shout,  
Long reign Caligula the emperor !

## TIBERIUS.

Delusions fall from me, and fancies melt

To bitter truth. Shiver these senators,  
Ye direful pains, more cruel than man's wrath  
Can heap upon his fellow ! lo, I claim  
Your seething ministry to scorch these knaves !  
Wrench ye and twist the cords that bind their souls  
In mortal agony—but break no thread !  
Make them groan out eternity in minutes,  
Trail their foul bodies through the jeering world,—  
Rend, shatter, mangle them, that they may know  
A little half of what Tiberius feels,  
And he shall cry you, *cease* !—glutted and drunk  
With satisfaction.

Oh, I faint again !

Where is Procillius ! Softly—let me lie  
Here, on the cold wet earth ! Oh, Charicles,  
Wring from the brain these bitter memories,  
From the hot heart draw out this latest grief,  
Though the life follow it.

#### CHARICLES.

Conceive these plagues  
But earth-born fantasies, alike unreal,  
Alike all impotent to grieve or touch  
The manliest part of life.

Throw thy mind upward to the fresh'ning dawn ;  
Mark where the poet Phœbus doth again  
Write his rich fancies on the glowing mists,  
That drape his eastern chamber !

How like a lover every burnished rack  
Drinks his young inspiration ! till informed  
And filled with music, the thick harmonies  
Gush forth to charm our world with prophecy  
Of her lord's coming.

Listen ! the touch of morning on the plain,  
Makes every tree a lyre : Lo, how it sends  
A soothing energy through every vein,  
And pours abundance into weed and leaf,  
Through measureless creation ! E'en to die—  
Once more to mix with the creative stream,  
That bounds exultant in the waking brute,  
Blooms in the flower, and bursting grandly on  
Through heaven's high chamber hurls the blazing globes,  
Twinkled in pallid clusters down to earth  
To blend our fluttering, uncertain thought  
With passionless eternity—to die—  
To breathe in simple confidence the soul  
Forth to embrace the morning—were but sweet  
At such an hour as this !

## TIBERIUS.

Tangled in snares—  
With nimble torments rent—  
What words can goad the fancy to depart  
From the vexed bulk that holds it ! I have dwelt,  
Ay, wrestled daily, with such mighty throes,  
As treble singly the extremest plunge  
Of man's conception. I am Cæsar yet !  
Away, and let me up ! for I am strong,  
Strong, to chastise these traitors. Though the breath  
Shall hoarsely rattle in the gasping throat—  
Though the thick words shall heavily presage  
The cheerless end of nature—though the dawn  
Scowls on me—I am strong !—and do defy  
This rebel senate ! Seize this crazy wretch,  
And his crime-clotted comrades. Come, despatch,  
Then on to Capri ! There we do condemn  
Your saucy insurrection. Pent and walled  
In our strong island, we do hold your threats  
A theme for laughter merely. Barriers  
Shall there defend our frolics, while we send  
Armies to crush and scourge these carping dolts  
Into submission. Come, despatch, I say !

These guards move slowly ! Are they still ungyved ?

I cannot see them plainly—Charicles—

Be near me still—ay, let me clutch this sword,

For we can fight our younger battles o'er

If need shall be ! Now lead me to the house.

Arouse our servants ! All the galleys wait.

Nay, bustle here, come—come.—Away for Capri !

*(Tiberius, supported by Charicles and attendants,  
is led into the villa.)*

*The Act closes.*

## ACT III.

*Caius Cæsar, Ennia.*

CAIUS.

WE have attained the summit ! All the guards  
Have softly echoed the great cry for us,  
Which we have wrung from Rome. Their voices wait  
The speedy word that shall announce his death,  
To cleave the air with clamor ! We may breathe  
And bask our languid person in the sun :—  
A little moment more shall seat thee empress,—  
Reality absorbs thy haunting hope,—  
And thou canst envy no one !

ENNIA.

Baseless vaunt !

Can any gaudy pomp of royalty,  
Or costly harness, which the state binds on  
To those who rule it, satisfy the soul

That restless dwells within us ! Hope fulfilled  
Is but a dream and fable !

CAIUS.

Yet the truth  
Now spurns thy doubting ! See these friends appear,  
Hasting to tell the best.

*(Enter Crassus and Lucullus.)*

What am I now ?

CRASSUS.

The Emperor !

LUCULLUS.

Caligula, the lord  
Of Rome, and father of her people, hail !

CAIUS.

Ha, I have grown ;—but not above the friends  
Who were the first to greet me. Well, how died  
The terror-stricken tyrant ?

CRASSUS.

In a swoon  
He faded from the earth ; upon his vexed



And tortured life, the dreaded shade of death  
Descended suddenly. His guilty soul,  
Quite vanquished with its griefs, so faintly passed,  
We might not mark the moment. Now his trunk,  
Stretched pale and lifeless in the hall within,  
Is food for mockery and bitter gibes,  
To the poor knaves he lorded.

CAIUS.

It is well.

Did Macro snatch the state-conferring ring  
And purple mantle from him? These must show,  
And instantly, on his successor—yet—  
Yet I am loth to take them from the body.

LUCULLUS.

They are stripped from him. Macro rent them off,  
Crying their richness and authority  
Befit a better ruler!

CAIUS.

Orders were

To do e'en thus—he is a friend most faithful!—  
Lucullus, we go in to deck ourselves

In these god-given trappings. But speed thou,  
Who here art master, to the court below,  
Where all the guards are quartered, where a throng,  
Drawn from the neighboring country, press and flock  
About this reverent mission—quick to hear  
How beats the city's pulse. At once proclaim  
The tyrant's death—and having wasted time  
In question and reply, (for we must robe  
To play the regal part,) lead to this place  
All who may hear thy voice ! Thou hast received  
The Emperor's orders.

LUCULLUS.

To fulfil them all.

[*Exit.*

CAIUS.

Go thou before me, Crassus ; I would not  
Approach him suddenly. Call Charicles—  
Nay, he is here already. We have need  
Of one the people trust,—he must remain  
Till we are strongly fixed.

(*Enter Charicles.*)

Receive our welcome !

Although we rise like yonder sun in power,

Like him we throw our benefits to all,  
To thee as to the others ! Stay awhile ;  
For having seen, ay, and foretold as well,  
This death that is our life—the peevish tongue  
Of scandal cannot touch us. Crassus, come,  
Lead us where lies the decorated scarf  
Of our new state ! We must return a monarch !

*[Exeunt Caius Cæsar and Crassus.]*

CHARICLES.

Does the intrepid consort share the joy,  
That she has toiled to compass ?

ENNIA.

Joy !—alas,

The very word doth shrivel on the lip.  
Well, well thou know'st how empty is the thing  
That we have gained—or seized most shamelessly.  
Are we not limited and hedged about  
When most our schemes have prospered ? Screened  
from us  
By the black veil that curtains time to come,  
Lingers our best of life. A jealous hope,  
Crushed love, and honor lost forever, prey

Upon us. Canst thou understand the pang  
Of passions disappointed—canst thou dream  
All that a woman knows, who bears a heart  
More finely touched and delicately wrought,  
Than those who herd about her ! No, alas !  
Thy stern and healthy holiness of soul  
Can never paint the weary thing it is,  
When the blythe hope and confidence of youth,  
Drain drop by drop away. This intellect  
Outgrows your mock religions. Then to see  
What toys we are to men—to be deceived,  
Cajoled by promises, enslaved, betrayed,  
By flattery insulted !—this, ay this,  
Is woman's happiest state. Unrecognized  
Her life's young fervor, and her sympathies  
Keen, eager, sparkling with the freshest tide  
Poured from the cup of nature, are repelled  
And stagnate into silliness or crime,  
As she is crushed,—or, burning into power,  
Crushes her wronger !

CHARICLES.

Woman, I perceive  
Through all these bitter words a spot in thee,

That the gross clasp of flattery hath not touched.  
Oh could it be, the fatal seal that hangs  
Above this future greatness, might not fall  
To stamp it into being—there were hope ;—  
But now, I fear the breath that feebly plays  
In yon deserted chamber, will quench out  
Thy best of life in parting !

ENNIA.

Hopes or prayers  
Alike are worthless ; for this blotted life  
Hath passed already ; and our Caius stands  
Supreme and perfect master over thee,  
As over all below us.

CHARICLES.

No, not yet :—  
For know the semblance of that certainty  
That seats Caligula is counterfeit ;—  
And Caius, like a tinselled player struts,  
To ape the monarch merely.

ENNIA.

Ha, deceived !

Dwells yet about his heart the little heat  
That makes and unmakes men ! Are we then mocked,  
Fooled, fooled, unto the last ! But 'tis not so—  
Or Charicles were near his wretched charge.

## CHARICLES.

'Twere madness now ; else would the curious crowd  
Press busily about him, and wrench out  
The life that loiters faintly. I must seem  
Deluded as the rest, who parted straight  
From the spoiled body. Yet a trusted slave,  
Obedient to my order, waits beside  
This friend-abandoned couch, and cherishes  
The slow returning life.

## ENNIA.

Tell Caius not  
What shadows dress his person, when he comes  
To take the people's homage ; or his hand,  
Bloodied enough already, shall dispatch  
This new created phantom !

## CHARICLES.

'Twere the same

To him, who ever shall be shadow-cloaked  
Nor guess the coarse delusion ; but to thee,  
In whom I note that vivid restless eye  
That looks beyond the present, this weak show  
Shall never harden to reality.  
Then let it fall away—and go thou forth  
Purged and regenerate. Nerve thy saddened soul  
To put away these empty fantasies,  
That trick thee on to ruin. Know, thy will,  
Steeled first in self-denial, may dispel  
These baffling doubts that jeopard all thyself !

## ENNIA.

It is too late !—I know not how to cringe  
Before the god your cunning fellows feign  
To patron trampled woman. For there are  
Enough, too many, faint and weary souls,  
Whom you can hold degraded and content,  
Tickled to mumm and mumble off their strength,  
As the sleek priest directs. My spirit spurns  
This refuge men have built us, and I stand  
Erect to suffer—to despair, perchance—  
But proud to hold reason unravished still !

## CHARICLES.

Thou hast not found the mission of those lives,  
That swell with power forever barred from action.  
'Tis hard, most hard to learn ; for we do strive,  
Ay, madly throe and grapple with our fate,  
Too blind to grasp the sober recompense,  
That compensating nature ever pours  
Where she has much denied. The destiny  
Of a proud woman—who hath soul and mind  
Too large to fill with priestly mockeries,  
Which are, and ever will be, man's device  
To busy and to rule her—though it seem  
Most bitter, may beget a sober joy  
Unimaged to the worldling. Battle not  
With thy restricted fate ; but gently yield  
To what has been ordained. Thou hast no room,  
Rightly to show the genius and the strength  
That riot hot within thee ! Some may not  
Spin out their schemes for trapping to themselves  
The glossy reek of flattery, that shall taint  
Those who most fairly win it. Then pass out  
Into the world about us ;—let this sun,  
Streamed through the opened portals of the sense,



Caress and ripen all thy sullen mind.  
'Tis only when ambition's galling spur,  
Bound in by cords thick-twisted through the heart,  
Is by long sufferance dulled and deadened out,  
That we receive existence, and therein  
Do learn to triumph nobly. Our despair  
Falls as a mantle as we leave the broil  
For the world's painted honors, and receive  
From nature and ourselves the strength that brings  
A perfect consolation. Ennia,  
I speak no foolish theories; but have lived—  
And learnt most bitterly the truth I utter.  
Hear me! nor weakly cast away thyself,  
That may be saved—still saved—from wretchedness!

## ENNIA.

It is too late—too late:—A woman's life  
Hath regular degrees to climb or fall,  
And as we press on each, the former sinks  
Behind us. We can never pause or turn—  
Fate whips us sternly on! Yet sir, believe,  
Could I have felt thy presence ere I stood  
Before the golden gates of womanhood,

I had received these gifts of form and strength,  
To cast aside fragrant with purer use.

*(Re-enter Caius Cæsar, followed by Crassus and attendants.)*

CAIUS.

Are we too soon arrived ! Our court and guards,  
Are they not here to greet us ?

CRASSUS.

Nay, they climb  
In glittering mass to hail thee, see, they toil  
And labor to the summit. Now they catch  
Thy regal robe flash welcome in the sun !  
Lucullus waves his hand—what shouts are those  
That answer ! All their caps leap to the air,  
And hark !—they cry—“The god Caligula !”

CAIUS.

*The god Caligula !* Physician, see  
Where now I stand to shame thy medicinès !  
Unless thy skill find quick'ning for the dead,  
As physic for the living, I am firm.  
The bond is broke that held thy mumbling lord

Before the place I craved. This jocund crowd  
Takes little thought of that gaunt spectacle,  
That coldly presses the wine-spotted stones.  
What is the profit of thine honesty—  
Thrust quite aside, unrecognized, displaced  
Before this sweeping surge of sycophants !

## CHARICLES.

We toil to be forgotten ; and at night  
Unnoticed sink to silence. 'Tis decreed.  
The sober daily duties of men's lives  
Win from the world no statues. Yet a tone  
Worthy the chords celestial that are placed  
Harmonious in our grasp, shall ripple on  
And softly range the ages. We must toil  
To be forgotten ; yet not so the good  
Or ill our life shall furnish. That impressed  
On those around us, and by them bequeathed  
To all who follow after, hurtles still  
Through the world's heart of being : therein lies  
Our certain immortality. Reflect,  
Thou future monarch ! dare not trifle now,—  
For every act of thine peals far and wide,  
Its proper note of shame or blessedness.

CAIUS.

We ask nor drug nor counsel ; thou art kept  
To tell this crowd our uncle was consumed  
By his own foul diseases, not dispatched  
By rumored treason. This thy work ! 'Tis mine,  
To greet these heralds of my dignity.

*(Enter Lucullus, followed by a crowd of guards,  
citizens, &c.)*

LUCULLUS.

Brothers and soldiers, freed from bloody bondage  
Beneath a tyrannous and galling yoke,  
Lift up your voices—give the heaven your caps—  
Cry, Hail Caligula the Emperor !

*(A great clamor.)*

CAIUS.

For this most fresh and cheering welcome, thanks.  
Know we stand here untarnished ;—The grey wretch,  
Abhorred by Heaven, by Heaven has been dethroned.  
Our hands are bloodless ;—and for proof we bring  
This grave physician. Charicles, declare  
Tiberius' death, and how our spotless self

Stayed not his breath from lingering to this hour,—  
Our wish and effort were that he should live.

## CHARICLES.

That wish is granted ! Bend thine eyes but there,  
Nay, 'tis no apparition ! Lift again  
Your pliant voices—See, how strong he walks !  
Shout welcome to the god Tiberius !

*(As Charicles speaks, the doors of the villa open and  
discover Tiberius stripped of his royal garments.  
He breaks from an attendant who supports him, and  
comes forward.)*

## TIBERIUS.

Palsy these limbs—numb every nerve in death—  
The stifling fury waked by such revolt  
Would vent itself through bones that had bleached out  
A century in the sun ! Then let me grow  
And tower in my wrath until I swell  
To bulk tremendous, and so toppling down  
Crush out this league of robbers !—

Caius Cæsar,

Have I not fed thy gross and lawless youth  
With license that is proverbed ! Must I whine

And crouch to thee for leave to die—to die,  
As peacefully as dog or slave, unracked  
Save by the easy wrenches of decay—  
Not gored and galled by black ingratitude  
Of a pride-bloated kinsman ! Dost thou hear  
These jangling words denounce thee ? Seize him, slaves !  
Bind fast this puppet monarch !—nay, keep place,  
I, who have wrestled with such ghastly throes  
As would have parched an army into dust,  
Can blight him singly ! Ha—now—now,—he melts  
And shrivels at my breath—scorched in the blaze,  
That bursts about my veins, he wails for mercy  
Ay, clench thy teeth ! Pray for thy life to crack !  
We two shall seethe in agony forever—  
Oh satisfaction ! bitter and most blest !—

## CAIUS.

Appalling sight ! Keep this crazed babbler from me !  
I charge ye, drag him hence ;—for though as mortal  
A terror steals upon me, and I shake  
At this enormous prodigy—yet ye,  
On whom the deadly flashings of his eye  
Are not so thickly poured, may drive away  
This spectre, ay, and stifle out the voice

That growls these curses on the dizzy head,  
Crowned by your acclamation.

## LUCULLUS.

Friends, arise,

It is too late to turn. Come press we on,  
And in a mass bear this sick tyrant back  
Into the hall. The morning sky affords  
A roof too fair for one distempered thus !  
Your voices given, there is no room for choice—  
Obey the Emperor proclaimed but now !  
Clear were his words ! Off with Tiberius !

[*A great confusion. Tiberius is seized and borne into  
the villa. Lucullus and Crassus follow hastily, and  
after them Charicles.*]

## ENNIA.

So thou hast gained the summit of all hope,  
And leav'st ambition, and that gnawing ache  
After the unattainable, that marks  
The brow, and wrinkles up the soul, far, far  
In the hot plain below ! Incautious man !  
Thy empty boast still frights the laughing breeze,  
Thy regal stride streaked in the passing mist,

Still throws fantastic shadows ! Strive again,  
Again, adore some phantom of the mind,  
By fancy changed to an external thing,  
That lives in thy hereafter !

CAIUS.

Woman, cease—

This is no time for mocking. We have gauged  
Our bliss too soon ; for it should seem there dwells  
A power beyond us, whose behest can change  
Our certainties to dreams and emptiness.

ENNIA.

Then pause to ponder wisely ; nor despise  
This scathed and blighted warning of a fate,  
That lurks with horror to crush out the reign,  
Blood-stained and monstrous in its infamy.  
And let that spark of highest life to man,  
That hid by bestial riot and debauch,  
Still frets and festers in us, kindle up  
And light thee from the curses of a world !

CAIUS.

Peace, woman ! what we learn by prodigies,



That plant their lessons in the living eye,  
Words but dilute and weaken. We are taught  
By hard experience, as the chafing tide  
Smooths the rough pebble to a polished gem.  
Our policy, when once the height is gained,  
Shall work reforms most needed, and restrain  
This court of sottish brawlers; for I quail  
At thought of end so black and direful.

## ENNIA.

Build thus thy safety, Caius; for we know  
In the hot chase for luring dignities,  
Ambition cannot bend to study form,—  
But bubbles onward, as the nimble brook  
Leaps by the flowers that fringe its sedgy bed,  
And hurries reckless to the sea—to find  
The waters salt and bitter, that from far  
Glanced merrily, and beckoned to the hills.  
Oh, keep about thee better friends than those,  
Who now in bloody passion seek the life,  
That nourished all their rankness!

## CAIUS.

Nay, these men

Do patriots solemn work, and recompense  
Rich and abundant—rarely patriots' pay—  
Shall line their chests with silver. Yet I keep,  
If princely favors are not powerless,  
This calm physician ;—for 'tis wise to trust  
A royal life to hands unparched by bribes.  
Hark ! how the growing tumult swells within  
And breathes a tone of triumph ! No dismay  
Again shall wrinkle the new day in horror !

*(Lucullus, Crassus, and Charicles enter. The crowd follow in confusion. Among them are those bearing the body of Tiberius, which is cast upon the earth.)*

LUCULLUS.

Again we do salute Caligula !  
There lies this pampered and remorseless man,  
The wreck and ghastly refuse of misrule !  
The flaming lights of lust and cruelty,  
Have one by one gone out. The dazzling beam  
Of mid-day cannot tinge his night to show  
How dead the darkness lies. Come and behold,—  
At length this mockery of humanity  
Hath wearied out his scourgers.

CRASSUS.

And again,

Caligula, we hail thee sovereign,  
And ruler of this empire ; and we pray,—  
That schooled by this black pageantry of death  
Ignoble and unpitied,—our new lord  
Will tender well the fabric he sustains,  
And purge this Asiatic luxury  
From court and state, before it crushes out  
Our ancient manhood, and that hardness  
Wherewith the past frowns on us.

CAIUS.

But we doubt

Our right to rule e'en now. Physician, say  
Is he yet past reviving?—if it be  
He cannot wake to curse me, why, I take  
The title you have offered, and shall build  
With moderation, and determined zeal  
The state you bid me govern. Yet declare  
If dead Tiberius be ! speak, Charicles,  
For on thy word, still shackled to the truth,  
My soul shall float to empire.

## CHARICLES.

Govern then

In quiet awe ; feeling the weighty trust  
This hour bestows. Tiberius hath lost  
His lease of black oppression : speak we not  
Of his disgraces further. How he died  
I may not wholly answer ; for the crowd  
Thronged thick about the bed, and only swayed  
As something heaved and struggled in the midst,  
More and more feeble grew the frequent throes,  
Till suddenly a stillness fell on all,  
And then the muffled mystery of death  
Shuddered along the chamber ! From the face,  
When Macro first uncovered its fixed lines,  
The startled crowd retreated,—and I saw  
Caligula was monarch. If a doubt  
Still linger, lift that mantle from the brow  
It covers. Thou shalt find a surer proof  
Of thy high place, than human breath can utter.

## CAIUS.

No let it lie : I will not look again  
Upon this stainer of our race and honor,

This Cæsar but in title, unallied  
Unto the blood of Julius. 'Tis declared  
That jealous zeal shall build again our state,  
To simple firmness and contented strength.  
And ye, whose clamors thrust us where we stand,  
Be near our person, where your fervent cares  
Shall win advantage. Crassus and Lucullus,  
Friends both, are not forgotten ;—nay another,  
By liberal favor, shall retain the place—  
That he has filled most faithfully and well :  
Know, Charicles, our bounty bids thee wait  
About us as physician, to protect  
Our life ; as thou hast shielded that he bore,  
Who was thy friend and master.

## CHARICLES.

Pardon, sir ;

The intervention of a solemn calm  
Between repose and action, rounds the life  
That nature offers man—and no light cause  
Should break this interval. I sought this court,  
That tender skill of old companionship  
Might somewhat soothe the anguish of a wretch,  
Abandoned to the plots and mockeries,

Of those who shared his loathsome revelries,  
And to the scorn of all. Look ! he has passed  
His retribution—I am needed not.  
In private quiet let me linger out  
A few short days ere my release shall come.  
For even now impressions, newly faint,  
Dislimn and vanish, and before the dawn  
The consciousness bounds into action—quick  
By instinct to devote to life the hours  
That hurry through the closing gates of Time.

## CAIUS.

Depart then at thy pleasure ! 'Twas our wish  
To cheer with profit, and society,  
The desolation, doubts, and thick'ning pains  
Which are the legacy that Age receives  
To sting him bitterly to craving death.  
But since alone, inactive for the world,  
Thou would'st wear out the remnants of the mind—  
So shall it be—depart in peace and safety.

## CHARICLES.

Age is not desolate : our memory  
Concentrates on the flash of happiness,

That has shot by us, and in mercy leaves  
All else to night, and silence. The serene,  
Pale twilight, vespersed by soft-flowing notes,  
That hail the parting of the garish day,  
Melts lovingly to darkness : so the mind,  
That feeds itself with labor, and retains  
In wholesome discipline its tenement,  
Shall fade most tranquilly to pleasant rest.  
Uncramped by pain,—uncrutch'd by doltish creed,—  
Nature invites the weary to lie down,  
To rest and live at once ;—to rest the thought—  
To charm these jaded pulses of the brain,—  
To dull the face, that burning through long nights,  
Mocks the dark void that shattered love has left ;—  
And yet to live in pure and passive life,—  
To harp the tempest in the vocal oak,  
To gaze undazzled at the face of day  
In the light-craving blossom,—or refined  
To airy vapor, drink the sunset in,  
And rain its golden glories down to men  
In liberal profusion. To the soul  
Uncloyed by narrow fable, unensnared  
By the foul grasp of passion, this, the end  
Of nature, is her favor last and best.

## ENNIA.

And is this all ! thou, who hast studied oft  
The final shudder or the rarer smile,  
As through the languid limbs oblivion  
Diffuses its repose—has nothing flashed  
To light that grand conception of our race,  
Which builds up temples and inspires song ?  
Shall we not think this consciousness hath life,  
Distinct from form and fabric, and may rise  
An exhalation, viewless near the earth,  
But thick'ning to a shape, as drifting on  
Through thinner air, it basks in light unshrouded !

## CHARICLES.

Nay ! this majestic possibility—  
The phantom that the fervid blood of youth  
Imbues with life, or grasping superstition  
Fevers for selfish profit—manly thought  
Fails to redeem from shadow. Our research  
Sees how the soul elaborates itself  
From the coarse nurture that supplies the frame,  
With means to grow and perish ; and we mark  
How they are one, together. We observe



A morsel undemanded to repair  
The wastes of daily use, or an excess  
In pleasure or in toil, unseat your gods  
And fashion new religions—shrivel up  
In frowns and cruelty the face of Jove,  
Zeus, Apis, Belus,—or what other name  
Man gives the deity diseases make  
Of that, for which his art can find no shape,  
His language no expression adequate.  
Then blemish not thy future, that shall change  
As damps, or study, or enfeebling lusts  
Mope in the wearied brain ;—but calmly deem  
Perfection is before us, clearly glassed  
In each pure fancy that the heart conceives,  
Yet feels too noble for the wavering will  
To strike into existence.—Our best life  
Breaks from the present, and flows strongly on  
To chafe and fret the barrier, that fate  
Builds round our little knowledge. It may be  
The glowing particle that wields thine arm,  
That loves and suffers through these instruments,  
Shall learn to cast them,—and yet bear and know.  
Or it may be this chance-commingled mass  
Of energy and weakness, shall dissolve,

Again to mix with less impurity  
In other life, built on the best of thine.  
And thus, still changing, purifying still,  
All that is guiltless in thy life shall live—  
Pervading time—coursing its stream forever !

CAIUS.

Farewell physician ! We respect thy wish—  
Depart with honorable furtherance.  
But let the rest now follow us within :  
There shall our plans be faithfully unrolled  
How best to use your gift ; for know ye all—  
Since fate that dallied with our expectation  
Hath lifted us to place—we shall rebuke,  
By clemency and sober watchfulness,  
The grave oppressions that disturb this land.

THE END.

## NOTE.

(103)



## NOTE.

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To the brief introduction prefixed to the preceding poem, the notice of a few incidents is added.

The action of the Emperor in the circus at Circejus is taken from Suetonius. The personal exposure and military discipline of Tiberius when in Germany, are related almost in the words of that writer. The cry of "Tiberius to the Tiber," with which the indignant populace received the body of the Emperor, has been anticipated. The fancied address of Apollo, and the sudden fall of the tower of Capri,\* are suggested in a passage from the same historian † The arrival of a special deputation from the Senate to salute Caligula, although not historical, is by no means improbable. Its dramatic introduction may be justified as the simplest expression of the universal feeling of hatred and defiance for the dying tyrant, and anxiety for the enthronement of his successor. The rage of Tiberius upon learning the release of certain prisoners by the Senate, and his resolution to hurry to Capri, and there brave his enemies, is taken from the writer already quoted. Both Tacitus and Suetonius name the villa of Lucullus as the place where Tiberius suddenly died. As the latter historian gives several accounts of the manner of his death, and seems equally doubtful about them all, the narrative of Tacitus (as given in the introduction) has been followed. The liberal promises and hearty deter-

\* The reader will have noticed that the modern name Capri has been substituted for the *Capreæ* of the ancients.

† Supremo natali suo Apollinem Timenitem et amplitudinis et artis eximiæ advectum Syracusis, ut in bibliotheca novi templi poneretur, viderat per quietem affirmantem sibi, non posse se ab ipso dedicari. Et ante paucos quam obiret dies turris Phari terræ motu Capreis concidit.

minations of reform with which Caligula concludes the drama are strictly in accordance with history. If we can trust Suetonius no prince ever began his reign with a more noble and enlightened policy, or so devotedly attached to his person those whom he governed. A positive insanity has sometimes been suggested as palliating the subsequent atrocities associated with his name.

It can hardly be necessary to remind any reader that the uncertainty regarding a future state of personal existence, attributed to one of the characters at the close of the poem, is supposed to come from one ignorant of Divine Revelation upon that point. Whether a reasonable assurance of such existence is independent of special revelation, is a question upon which the author expresses no opinion—it being sufficient for his purpose that many men of mature judgment and enlarged culture have thought it was not. As answering an objection to the different treatment of this subject in a former drama, it may be worth while to remark, that in an age of simplicity and faith, human beings swayed by the strongest emotion of youth—a passion which in its first intensity seems to bear the impress of immortality—may arrive at conclusions unnatural, in an age of luxury and skepticism, to one long past the period of life when the affections govern and absorb the being.









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